

**MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF SEAT PLEASANT  
PUBLIC SESSION  
MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 2012  
7:00P.M.**

**1. OPENING**

**1.1.1 Call to Order**

Council President Porter called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

**1.1.2 Roll Call**

Present: Mayor Eugene Grant (Late Arrival 7:17pm), Councilmember Darrell Hardy, Council President Kelly Porter, Councilmember Gerald R. Raynor, Sr., Councilmember Elenora Simms, Councilmember Aretha Stephenson (Excused), Councilmember Reveral Yeargin

Staff: Robert Ashton, City Treasurer, Vincent Jones, City Administrator, Dashaun N. Lanham, City Clerk, LeRoy Patterson, Lieutenant, Johnny Thompson, Director of Public Works

**1.1.3 Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance:**

The invocation was given by Councilmember Yeargin

**1.1.4. Approval of Agenda**

It was motioned by Councilmember Yeargin and seconded by Councilmember Hardy to approve the agenda. The motion carried.

**1.1.5. Reading/Approval of Public Session, Regular Work Session Meeting Minutes:**

- It was motioned by Councilmember Yeargin and seconded by Councilmember Hardy to approve the Regular Work Session meeting minutes for Monday, December 5, 2011. The motion carried. The minutes were unanimously approved.
- It was motioned by Councilmember Hardy and seconded by Councilmember Yeargin to approve the Public Session minutes for Monday, December 12, 2011. The motion carried. The minutes were unanimously approved.

**2. PRESENTATIONS:**

**2.1.** Tonya Hedgepath stated that she attended a meeting in October and Councilman Porter and Mr. Jones had been attended the meetings.

- She stated that the sustainable community program was passed by HB475. She said by seeking the designation it puts you at the top of the list for state programs.
- She said Seat Pleasant was grandfathered into the sustainable communities, but, it must be renewed before July 2012. She said they are looking for collaboration and joint applications for the surrounding neighbors. She said it does not permit you from applying on your own, but they urging you to work together.
- She said the applications are due on April 2, 2012 and she recommend that we plan to have it completed by March 2, 2012. She said we need to designate two-three people that will do the work. She said they will be the workgroup for the city.
- Councilman Porter stated that the Council will be discussing this in the Regular Work Session about moving forward.

### **3. LEGISLATION**

#### **3.1. None**

### **4. REPORTS**

#### **4.1. Mayor's Report:**

- Mayor Grant stated that he does not have a report. However, he had encouraged the Council to review the legislation packet put together by Mr. Jones and the staff. The legislation session begins on Wednesday, January 11, 2012.
- He stated that he has spoken with Mr. Jones and he has followed-up with various agencies.
- He stated that the County is predicting a budget short fall in 2013.
- Mayor Grant stated that there will be major cuts in the budget presented to the Council this year. We cannot provide a hypothesis due to the inconsistencies. There will be cuts across the board and every single department will experience some short fall.
- We want everyone to know that across the board the County, State and Federal have been cutting and so will Seat Pleasant. We have dodged some bullets in the past three (3) years. He wanted to be certain that he went on the record to state the concerns.
- He stated he is aware that there all kinds of issues that we need to consider sustain community
- We will maintain the core services in public safety and trash

- There will not be any increases in any department this year. We will maintain and hold down the fort until we get over this economic situation.
- He stated that we have not had to endure any budget cuts and/or layoffs.
- He wanted to bring to the residents attention three bills. PG417-12 Homeowners Tax Credit. He stated that so many people will benefit from the bill. Please make phone calls and write letters in support of the bill when the session begins in January.
- PG-410-12 Children with Developmental Disability. He stated that Seat Pleasant Elementary School has the largest autism population with 75 students who all passed the Maryland State Test. He stated that there are resources needed to sustain the individuals. Please call to support the bill
- PG402-12 Bag Tax-Mayor Grant stated that he was opposed as he feels the bill is costly to residents and people without money to pay for bags. He is asking the Council to look up the bills. He stated they will be listed in the legislative packet.
- He stated that no one from the House side was in attendance at the Legislative Breakfast due to Delegate Howard's Prayer breakfast being on the same day. We set the date in accordance to the County Executive schedule. However, we will ensure that they receive a copy of the packet.
- He stated that the Health Summit Initiative has been discussed and hopes in a week or two that we should be able to provide primary care out of Prince George's Hospital. We are going after transitional funding and innovative funds, which has about 7 billion dollars. He has brought an internationally known firm to the table.
- The City of Seat Pleasant should be proud as we are leading on this effort.

#### **4.2. Kelly Porter, Council President Report:**

- Council President Porter stated that his monthly report is on the information stand.

#### **4.3 Kevin Brenner, Chief-Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire Department**

- Chief Brenner was absent and no report was submitted for the month of December.

#### **4.4. City Administrator – Vincent E. Jones**

- Mr. Jones stated that he wanted to be brief and we have been working internally to work on the budget this year. We are trying to stay in line with the principles that the Mayor has brought forth this year.

- December was the end of the year and we ended on a high note with the Council putting on the legislative breakfast. He stated that he has followed up with the Economic Development staff
- He stated that the Council approved the strategic workshop and he and Ms. Rhim are moving forward for the workshop in February
- The personnel manual was approved
- He stated that one of the concerns will be the Fire Department and it will have an impact on the volunteer fire department. The council stated that they wanted to get the community involved.
- Mr. Jones stated that he was working with Councilman Yeargin to facilitate a meeting with the Fire Chief, which will be on January 19, 2012. He stated that he and Mrs. Lanham will be getting the word out to the council to determine if the Fire Chief will come to Seat Pleasant or we will go to his office.
- Councilwoman Simms wanted to know if the Community Services coordinator will be getting the information out to community on the Rally for the Fire Department.
- Councilwoman Simms wanted to know if the Code Enforcement Officer or Nuisance Abatement Coordinator could go out with her to identify the vacant properties in her ward and make contact with the owners.
- Mayor Grant wanted to know if the Code Enforcement Officer maintained a list of vacant properties in the City broken down by the Wards.
- Mayor Grant wanted to know if it is the Code Enforcement Officer and Nuisance Abatement Coordinator responsibility to address the vacant property concerns. Mayor Grant wanted to know whose responsibility it would be to address the issue. They have requested a copy of the job descriptions of each.
- Mr. Jones stated that it is the Nuisance and Abatement responsibility and Code Enforcement Officer is the record keeper.

#### **4.5. Finance Department- Robert Ashton, Treasurer**

- Mr. Ashton stated that his report will be very brief. He stated that all the residents in Seat Pleasant property tax assessment have been lowered. He stated that information provided could be very devastating to the City of Seat Pleasant.
- They will have someone to come out to the Council Public Session to explain how they have arrived to the numbers. He stated that if you have some concerns that you can file an appeal. He stated that you should receive the property assessment information before February 10, 2012. He stated that they will have someone from the Department of Taxation and Assessment to attend the Public Session next month. Mr. Ashton stated the information will be in the news

letter, and if any resident needs help in completing the information, please contact him.

- Councilwoman Simms stated that they can contact her too and she will assist you in completing your paperwork.
- Council President Porter stated that this is so important and we need to get the information out to the citizenry.
- Mayor Grant wanted to know if Mr. Ashton could get with Mrs. Lanham to create a post card for the community. Mayor Grant stated that 60% of our revenues are based on taxes. Mayor Grant stated that as Mayor Grant has stated some properties values have been cut in half.
- Mr. Ashton stated that he has spoken with some of his fellow Treasurers in other areas, and they have stated the decrease is in District 18.
- Mr. Jones stated that he feels that this is something that needs to be raised to the top level. He said he feels that a conversation should have been discussed with the City before they cut the assessment by fifty percent.
- Mayor Grant stated that he would like a letter to be drafted to the Governor, State Delegates, Department of Assessment and Taxation, state Comptroller with the elected official signatures, and the City Treasurer.
- Mr. Ashton stated that it is an impact on our budget by a one million dollar reduction.
- Mayor Grant stated that if the reduction of one million is accurate we will need to lay off some of our staff.
- Mayor Grant stated that petroleum cost and taxes are consistently going up.
- Mr. Ashton stated that if anyone have any questions, please contact him.
- Mr. Ashton thanked the Council for having the discussion.
- Mr. Jones thanked Mr. Ashton for bringing the information forward. Mayor Grant asked Mr. Jones to reach out to his colleagues in Fairmount Heights and Capitol Heights to see what kind of information is being said on the matter.

#### **4.6. Police Department – Samuel Prue, Chief of Police**

- Sgt. Patterson stated that he wanted to touch base on some information in the Department report.
- He referenced the staff in the Police Department being at fourteen
- He stated that Mobile Data Terminal have been installed in the cruiser and will be mounted.
- He stated that two officers have completed training to perform their own investigation regarding fatality.

- Opto Traffic completed a survey on Saturday for an additional camera to be installed on Seat Pleasant Drive
- He stated that Seat Pleasant did not receive any calls on New Year's regarding shot fired.
- The system they just implemented and they have responded to 3000 call, 50 lock ups and 850 cars were impounded from the recording of May to December 2011.
- He stated that if any of you get a call regarding the fire truck on Martin Luther King it was not fire.
- Councilman Raynor wanted to know if it was possible for a car to patrol at 7206 Joplin St., it is a vacant property and some guys were hanging out shooting dice.
- He stated that listening to concerns about vacant properties after the list is completed. He will work with the Code Enforcement Officer on contacting the owners to post a No Trespassing Signs on the property.

#### **4.7. Public Works Department- Johnny Thompson, Director of Public Works**

- Mr. Thompson stated that he wanted to say that all the patches were covered in the City. However, Councilwoman Simms had to have the street broken up again.
- He stated that they have contacted the County and they have plans to open up more streets to make sewer lines repairs.
- He stated that even though the snow isn't going to stick we are being proactive and putting salt on the streets to ensure that some areas do not have concerns.
- He thanked the Mayor and Council for raising the bar in man power and equipment. In December they have approved a new work order system that will produce reports and manage our fleet.

#### **5. CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

1. Mr. Reynolds stated that we need more lighting behind the Keith & Sons, as it has no lights. He stated that they are beginning to hang out and drink. Mayor Grant wanted to know the time of day they are hanging out in the area. Mr. Reynolds stated it is 24/7. Mayor Grant stated that he has been informed of this concern and when he followed up he never sees anyone. Councilman Porter stated that we have a loitering law on the books. Mayor Grant stated that some of the business did not want No Loitering Signs in their windows.

He stated that they are still having problems with people speeding through the stop signs.

Councilman Raynor stated that when he was in Phoenix some of the towns had street signs camera. Councilman Porter wanted to know if Opto Traffic could provide the camera.

2. Mr. Haywood Hodges- 70<sup>th</sup> Place, He recommended the City resurface the speed humps.

He stated that he cut trees on the outside of his premises and wanted to know if it is the responsibility of the town to take care of the tree. It is located at 6035 MLK court

He wanted to know if the city will cut the grass on the vacant properties. Councilman Porter has requested that Mr. Jones get an assessment on 6033 MLK court.

Mayor Grant has requested that Mr. Hodges contact Mr. Jones in one week for an update on the situation. He stated that the Community Services and Chaplain Ivey have been working with her regarding the issues.

## **6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

### **6.1 Update on G.S. Proctor Lobbying Proposal**

- Councilman Porter stated that the update memorandum is in the Council packet for your review. If you have any questions, please see the City Administrator.

### **6.2. Update on McDonald's Renovation Project**

- Councilman Porter stated that he had the opportunity to ride pass the McDonald's on his way home after the presentation.
- Mr. Jones stated that the Economic Development Coordinator is waiting on a response from the attorney who represent McDonald's.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **7.1. None**


## **8. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 8.1. Opening of General Assembly Session, Maryland State House, Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at 12:00pm
- 8.2. MML Opening Day Legislative Reception, Wednesday, January 11, 2012, Maryland Inn, 58 State Circle, Annapolis, MD from 5:00pm-7:00pm

- 8.3. District 7-Civic & Association Meeting, Wednesday, January 18, 2012, County Administration Building, 14741 Governor Oden Bowie Dr., Upper Marlboro, MD 6:00pm-8:30pm
- 8.4. Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition Documentary "Stealing Trust", Thursday, January 19, 2012, Seat Pleasant City Hall-Council Chambers, 7:00pm
- 8.5. Ward IV & Ward V Meeting, Saturday, January 28, 2012, Seat Pleasant City Hall-Council Chambers, 2:30pm-4:30pm

9. **ADJOURN**- The meeting was adjourned at 8:35p.m.

Submitted by,

  
Dashaun N. Lanham  
City Clerk